

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1. (previously presented) A sterilization container system comprising:
 - an enclosure defining an interior volume;
 - an upwardly facing surface in the interior volume;
 - a flexible elastomeric mat having a downwardly facing surface resting upon the upwardly facing surface, and
 - a pattern of ridges extending from the downwardly facing surface, wherein the pattern is such that no fold line can traverse the mat from one side to the other without intersecting at least one ridge.
2. (previously presented) The sterilization container system according to claim 1 wherein the pattern is such that no fold line can traverse the mat from one side to the other without intersecting a plurality of the ridges.
3. (previously presented) The sterilization container system according to claim 1 wherein the ridges have a height of 0.5 mm to 10.0 mm.
4. (previously presented) The sterilization container system according to claim 3 wherein the ridges have a height of 0.75 mm to 5.0 mm.

5. (previously presented) The sterilization container system according to claim 4 wherein the ridges have a height of 1.0 mm to 4.0 mm.
6. (previously presented) The sterilization container system according to claim 1 wherein the flexible elastomeric mat is formed of silicone.
7. (previously presented) The sterilization container system according to claim 6 wherein the silicone has a hardness of equal to or less than 90A on the Shore A Scale.
8. (previously presented) The sterilization container system according to claim 1 wherein the pattern extends substantially across a dimension of the downwardly facing surface.
9. (previously presented) The sterilization container system according to claim 1 wherein the mat further comprises a plurality of upwardly projecting members.
10. (previously presented) The sterilization container system according to claim 1 wherein the mat further comprises a plurality of apertures therethrough.
11. (previously presented) The sterilization container system according to claim 1 wherein the pattern is continuous.

12. (previously presented) The sterilization container system according to claim 1 wherein the pattern is discontinuous.

13. (previously presented) The sterilization container system according to claim 1 wherein the pattern comprises concentric shapes.

14. (previously presented) A method of sterilizing an item comprises the steps of:

placing a flexible, elastomeric mat into an enclosure having an interior volume;

placing the item onto the mat; and

levitating the mat above a bottom surface of the enclosure via a pattern of ridges

extending from a lower surface of the mat, the pattern being such that no fold line can traverse the mat from one side to the other without intersecting at least one ridge.

15. (previously presented) A mat for use with a sterilization container, the mat comprising:

a first side;

a second side;

an upper surface;

a lower surface; and

a pattern of ridges extending from the lower surface, wherein the pattern is such that no fold line can traverse the mat from the first side to the second side without intersecting at least one ridge.

16. (previously presented) The mat according to claim 15 wherein the pattern is such that no fold line can traverse the mat from the first side to the second side without intersecting a plurality of ridges.

17. (previously presented) The mat according to claim 15 wherein the pattern extends substantially across a dimension of the lower surface.

18. (previously presented) The mat according to claim 15 wherein the pattern is continuous.

19. (previously presented) The mat according to claim 15 wherein the pattern is discontinuous.

20. (previously presented) The mat according to claim 15 wherein the upper surface further comprises a plurality of upwardly projecting members extending therefrom.

21. (new) The sterilization container system according to claim 1 wherein the pattern of ridges further comprises:

a first set of ridges, wherein at least one ridge of the first set of ridges is discontinuous to create a first aperture therein, wherein the first aperture is configured to allow a fluid to flow therethrough, and wherein a first ridge of the first set of ridges does not intersect with a second ridge of the first set of ridges; and

a second set of ridges, wherein at least one ridge of the second set of ridges is discontinuous to create a second aperture therein, wherein the second aperture is configured to

allow a fluid to flow therethrough, wherein a first ridge of the second set of ridges does not intersect with a second ridge of the second set of ridges, wherein the first set of ridges are positioned one of perpendicular and transverse to the second set of ridges, wherein at least the first ridge of the first set of ridges intersects with at least the first ridge of the second set of ridges, and wherein the first aperture is configured to be in fluid communication with the second aperture such that a fluid can flow through the first aperture and the second aperture.

22. (new) The sterilization container system according to claim 1 wherein the pattern of ridges further comprises:

a first set of ridges, wherein at least one ridge of the first set of ridges is discontinuous to create a first aperture therein, and wherein the first aperture is configured to allow a fluid to flow therethrough; and

a second set of ridges, wherein at least one ridge of the second set of ridges is discontinuous to create a second aperture therein, wherein the second aperture is configured to allow a fluid to flow therethrough, and wherein the first aperture is configured to be in fluid communication with the second aperture such that a fluid can flow through the first aperture and the second aperture.

23. (new) The mat according to claim 15 wherein the pattern of ridges further comprises:

a first set of ridges, wherein at least one ridge of the first set of ridges is discontinuous to create a first aperture therein, wherein the first aperture is configured to allow a fluid to flow

therethrough, and wherein a first ridge of the first set of ridges does not intersect with a second ridge of the first set of ridges; and

a second set of ridges, wherein at least one ridge of the second set of ridges is discontinuous to create a second aperture therein, wherein the second aperture is configured to allow a fluid to flow therethrough, wherein a first ridge of the second set of ridges does not intersect with a second ridge of the second set of ridges, wherein the first set of ridges are positioned one of perpendicular and transverse to the second set of ridges, wherein at least the first ridge of the first set of ridges intersects with at least the first ridge of the second set of ridges, and wherein the first aperture is configured to be in fluid communication with the second aperture such that a fluid can flow through the first aperture and the second aperture.

24. (new) The mat according to claim 15 wherein the pattern of ridges further comprises:

a first set of ridges, wherein at least one ridge of the first set of ridges is discontinuous to create a first aperture therein, and wherein the first aperture is configured to allow a fluid to flow therethrough; and

a second set of ridges, wherein at least one ridge of the second set of ridges is discontinuous to create a second aperture therein, wherein the second aperture is configured to allow a fluid to flow therethrough, and wherein the first aperture is configured to be in fluid communication with the second aperture such that a fluid can flow through the first aperture and the second aperture.